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THE CESNOLA COLLECTION OF CYPRIOTE ANTIQUITIES

THIRD REPORT

NOTE

The Trustees of the Museum take pleasure in announcing that the work of examining, re-arranging and labelling the Cesnola Collection, upon which Professor John L. Myres and the members of the Classical Department have been engaged for over a year, is practically completed, and the collection in its new setting is now open to the public. In the following report Professor Myres gives a final account of the results of his studies and of the principles upon which his arrangement of the collection is based. The handbook of the collection, which he has also kindly consented to prepare for the Museum, is not yet quite ready for the press, but will be issued during the coming year.

AFTER unavoidable delays it is at last possible to report further on the results of recent study and re-classification.

The general plan of re-arrangement has been described in previous reports.¹ After full consideration of all available information as to the circumstances of discovery, it has seemed best to treat each object in the collection as an independent example of the art of Cyprus, and to base the new arrangement solely on considerations of workmanship and style. Thus arranged, the Collection constitutes a type series of the principal forms of pottery, sculpture, and other works of

Cypriote art and industry, which is certainly the largest of its kind, and in most departments also the most varied in the world. After careful examination, and the withdrawal of more than half of the former contents of the show-cases, there remain exhibited more than a thousand vases; nearly five hundred pieces of sculpture; about two hundred inscriptions; about two hundred other stone objects, such as vessels of alabaster, steatite, and serpentine; over five hundred bronzes; about four hundred terra-cotta statuettes; and more than a thousand pieces of jewelry, of which about nine hundred are in gold, and the remainder in silver, crystal, enamel, and other precious materials.

The jewelry is exhibited, as before, in the Gold Room of the Museum: but it has been re-classified in five principal groups assignable respectively to the Bronze Age (before 1000 B.C.), the Early Iron Age (1000–750 B.C.), the Graeco-Phoenician Age (750–500 B.C.), the Hellenic Age (500–300 B.C.), and the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman Age (after 300 B.C.). About four hundred objects have been withdrawn from exhibition; these are almost all bracelets, rings and earrings of silver which had suffered irreparably from the salt, moist earth of Cypriote tombs. The collection of Jewelry will be re-numbered, and described fully, in the Guide to the Cesnola Collection, which is now in preparation.

The bronzes and terra cotta figures also

¹BULLETIN, IV: 95, 153.

remain incorporated in the Museum's general collections. The bronzes include a few works of art of high quality; a large series of bowls, lamp stands, and other articles of furniture; and a number of small objects such as pins, brooches, and early knives, daggers, and spearheads, which are of considerable scientific interest. Their numbering is practically unchanged, and only a brief summary of them need be included in the new Guide.

The terra-cotta collection includes examples of every distinct fabric and style which has been recorded in Cyprus, and is exceptionally rich in the hand-modeled gayly-painted groups and single figures belonging to the Early Iron Age, whose quaint but vigorous pose and gestures throw much light on the daily life of that obscure period. This collection needs to be re-numbered, and will be described summarily in the Guide.

The inscriptions are still exhibited in the corridor immediately north of the Library, and their numerical order remains unchanged for the present. A few inscribed vases and other objects, however, which are of more importance for their fabric or style than for the inscriptions—usually the merest *graffiti*—which they bear, are incorporated in the collection to which each object would be assigned if uninscribed. Only a brief account of the inscriptions need be included in the Guide, for they are already being studied exhaustively by Dr. Richard Meister, and are to be published by him in a forthcoming volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*.

There remain the small series illustrating minor arts of stone working, and the very large collections of pottery and sculpture. All these have been entirely re-arranged, and are installed in the rooms numbered 41 and 42—the Cesnola Room and its Annex—where the cases have been re-modeled, and in part rebuilt, to receive them.

THE CESNOLA ROOM AND ITS ANNEX

In the middle of these rooms seven center cases, designated by letters from A to G, contain the colossal Herakles, the famous Priest with the Dove, once known

as the Bearded Aphrodite, and ten other statues of life size or more, together with the two great sculptured sarcophagi, the principal early reliefs, and a few architectural fragments which deserve to be studied from all sides, while on either side of the larger sarcophagus are placed the two mummy-like sarcophagi.

Round both rooms, wall cases rising to the level of the windows are designated by Arabic numerals, and assigned as follows: Nos. 1–12 (on the West Wall) to the pottery of the Bronze Age; Nos. 13, 14 (at the south end of the West Wall) and Nos. 15–28 (on the South Wall) to the pottery of the Early Iron Age, and subsequent periods; Nos. 28–50 (on the East Wall) to a type series of the smaller statues ranging from examples of Oriental style (750–600 B.C.), characteristic of the early part of the Graeco-Phoenician Age, to the most debased workmanship of Graeco-Roman times. The remainder of the wall cases (Nos. 51–72 which furnish the Annex, Room 42), are assigned to the principal varieties of funerary monuments, decorated with lotos capitals, sphinxes, lions, or portrait groups.

Similar wall cases placed against the piers of the arcade between the principal Cesnola Room and the Annex, contain the small collections already mentioned, of minor objects in steatite (No. 74), alabaster (No. 75), and soft native limestone (No. 75), together with a type series (No. 76) of unpainted vases mainly of Graeco-Roman date, and of foreign styles.

Between the center cases and the wall cases, the floor of the principal room is occupied by seventeen floor cases, marked with Roman numerals. These contain larger objects, and a few special groups, all intended to be studied in connection with those which occupy the wall cases nearest to them. Thus, Floor Case I contains larger examples of the Bronze Age Pottery exhibited in Wall Cases 1–3, than these wall cases would hold; Floor Case II supplements Wall Case 8 in the same way; Floor Case III goes with Wall Case 12, and so on. Floor Cases I–IX are thus devoted to the pottery: Floor Cases XI–XVII to sculpture, and Floor Case X to a few large terra-cotta

heads, and other parts of large clay figures, mainly of early date. These large modeled heads, as will be readily understood, stand in intimate connection with the earlier schools of sculpture in stone, and are thus placed within easy reach of them.

THE SCULPTURES

It was noted in the First Report¹ that a large number of the sculptures had been covered with a thin wash of pulverized limestone, no doubt intended to protect their surface, and to reduce the disfigurement caused by weather stains and modern repairs; and the Second (Interim) Report² recorded the first results of a thorough cleansing of the sculptures selected for the type series. Before this cleansing was begun, or even projected, the Museum had already obtained from Charles Balliard, who had been intrusted by General di Cesnola with extensive repairs and restorations, a full statement of his recollections of this work, and of the state in which he found the sculptures when he first took them in hand. The subsequent removal of the limewash has confirmed the accuracy of Mr. Balliard's memory, and there is little doubt that the Museum is now in possession of all the material data for a history of the collection from the time of its acquisition by the Museum. The fortunate discovery in London of a series of photographs in the possession of the Hellenic Society makes it possible to trace even farther back the fortunes of some of the most important sculptures, for these photographs were clearly taken while the collection was still in Europe, and before the execution of some of the repairs above mentioned. Reduced copies of these photographs are added to the Museum's collection.

To clean the whole of the duplicates and the students' collection in the same way is a less important matter, which can be postponed for the present.

The closer study of the sculptures which is possible since the objects in the type series were cleaned, shows that many of the statues have undergone minor repairs;

that these repairs were made at more than one period; and that the great majority of them are such as it would be an obvious duty to undertake if the Collection were a new acquisition of the Museum. Many of the figures would indeed be more easily appreciated if they were treated further in the same way. On the other hand (as was only to be expected in a very large collection of objects, of unfamiliar types and styles) a few mistakes were made: none of them, however, affect any important specimen.

The re-discovery of many traces of ancient painting on the surface of these sculptures has been already announced in the Second (Interim) Report.³ The most important examples of this are the well-known Priest with a Dove, a small statue of Herakles, a life-size bearded head of a Priest or Votary, and two funerary stelae with knotted sashes painted across their flat surface. The large painted sarcophagus is found to have been slightly retouched, but by far the greater part of its paint is ancient and in good condition.

The classification of the sculptures divides the whole series into seven periods and styles which follow:

I. The Oriental Style under mainly Assyrian influence, representing the art of Cyprus from its annexation by Assyria in 664 B.C., or approximately the period 700-650 B.C.

II. The Oriental Style under mainly Egyptian influence, representing the period of Egyptian predominance under the XXVI Dynasty, from 664 B.C. to 528 B.C.

III. The Archaic Cypriote Style corresponds approximately with the sixth century B.C. It begins within the period of Egyptian influence, and ends approximately with the Ionian Revolt of 500-494 B.C.

IV. The Mature Cypriote Style, under Greek influence, marks the period from the Persian Wars to the Athenian retreat from the Levant in 449 B.C. After 449 B.C., Cyprus slipped out of touch with the main course of Greek culture, and entered on a period of lonely stagnation which inevitably lapsed into decay.

¹ BULLETIN, IV: 95. ² BULLETIN, IV: 153.

³ BULLETIN, IV: 153.

V. The Decadent Cypriote Style, under later Greek influences, lasts from about 400 B.C. to about 350 B.C., and is followed by a period of isolation and provincialism like that of the century before. The art of Cyprus thus sinks gradually to be a mere local fashion of the current Hellenistic schools.

VI. The Hellenistic Style in Cyprus covers approximately the last three centuries B.C. Portraiture is attempted occasionally, but most of the types are weakly idealized in imitation of the current fashions in Antioch or Alexandria.

VII. The Graeco-Roman Style is a prolongation of the Hellenistic, after the Roman conquest of the island in 58 B.C. Some of its latest products show a remarkable affinity with the barbaric work of the Hellenized East, in Persia and Northern India.

Within these successive periods, different kinds of sculpture were popular at different times. In addition, therefore to the principal series, which is intended to illustrate the general characters and tendencies of each style, smaller groups have been constituted to represent special cults like those of Herakles, Zeus Ammon, and the Paphian Mother-Goddess; special votive offerings, such as chariot groups, banquet scenes, domestic animals, and parts of the human body; and special types of votary like the so-called Temple Boys.

A separate section in the Annex is reserved for sculptured tombstones and sarcophagi; and the inscribed stone objects, as reported already, retain for the present their old place in the corridor leading to the Museum Library.

THE VASES

The collection of vases has been very carefully examined, and entirely re-classified. Damaged and inferior specimens have been referred to the students' collection, and a few obvious repairs have been executed. There is, however, much detailed work which may still be done at leisure, to free the vases completely from incrustation and other disfigurements. Careful tests of selected examples showed

that the collection was almost wholly free from modern retouches; the surprising variations of tint and draughtsmanship, which have perplexed earlier critics, seem to be due to the ancient artists themselves, and to the materials with which they worked. While the sculptures in the collection have been derived mainly from a few rich sanctuaries, the vases are the spoil of a large number of tombs, in many ancient cemeteries. It has not, however, been possible to re-constitute any tomb-groups, or even to identify with certainty fabrics peculiar to a district, except when the results of later excavations are conclusive, as happens rarely, as to the origin of a well-defined variety. On the other hand, the principal fabrics of pottery, and the sequence of styles are now known for certain from other evidence, and as the Cesnola Collection includes examples of every important variety of Cypriote pottery of every period, it has seemed best to classify it strictly by periods and styles.

The classification of the vases begins, like the ceramic art itself, far earlier than that of the sculpture. It also ends earlier, because the Greek ideas and habits which dominated Cypriote civilization from the fourth century onward, favored a simpler tomb equipment than native custom had required, and also because they substituted no new style of decorative pottery for the native art which they destroyed. From the beginning of the seventh century, however, to the end of the fourth, the periods and styles of vase-painting run closely parallel with those of the sculpture. The whole ceramic series is as follows:

The Bronze Age. Before 1000 B.C. no upward limit can be fixed as yet.

Period I, about 3000–2000 B.C. Fabric I. Polished Red Ware.

Period II, about 2000–1500 B.C. II, Red and Black Slip Wares. III, White Painted Ware. IV, Black Ware with Red Paint.

Period III, about 1500–1000 B.C.

Fabric V, White Slip Ware. VI, Base Ring Ware. VII–X, Fabrics of Foreign Origin. XI, Mycenaean (Late Minoan) Vases, and XII, Native Imitations of these. It should be re-

membered that in the last phases of the Bronze Age culture, iron occurs as a rarity: these phases should therefore strictly speaking be regarded as transitional.

The Early Iron Age, about 1000-750 B.C. Fabrics XIII-XV, Cypriote Bucchero Wares. XVI, Painted White Ware. XVII, Painted Red Ware.

The Graeco-Phoenician Age about 750-500 B. C., corresponds with the period of Sculpture marked by the Oriental Style, and Archaic Cypriote Style. It is characterized by rich developments of Fabrics XVI-XVII (Painted White and Red Wares) to the exclusion of all earlier fabrics.

The Hellenic Age about 500-200 B.C., corresponds with the Mature and Decadent Cypriote styles of sculpture, and is therefore characterized by decadent and conventional forms everywhere.

It leads rapidly into

The Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman Ages, after 300 B.C., in which native styles

of painted pottery disappear almost wholly, and are replaced by common unpainted wares, foreign glazed fabrics, or, at best, coarse survivals of a few native late styles.

The vases have been selected so as to illustrate in a series of moderate size the largest possible variety of points in the history and technique of the potter's art; and they are arranged as far as possible in groups intended to throw into the strongest relief the successive influences and tendencies of Cypriote ceramics, and the series of development. In this grouping, it becomes unnecessary to label each individual specimen: the group label indicates sufficiently the information which it is desired to convey. In the new Guide this part of the Collection will be treated similarly in groups; individual vases will be described separately only when they themselves represent a group, or are of sufficient importance to be discussed as independent works of art.

JOHN L. MYRES.

